

Constitution
OF THE
Communist
Political
Association

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Association

TOGETHER WITH
BY-LAWS OF THE C. P. A.
OF NEW YORK STATE

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COMMUNIST POLITICAL ASSOCIATION

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PREAMBLE

The Communist Political Association is a non-party organization of Americans which, basing itself upon the working class, carries forward the traditions of Washington, Jefferson, Paine, Jackson and Lincoln, under the changed conditions of modern industrial society.

It seeks effective application of democratic principles to the solution of the problems of today, as an advanced sector of the democratic majority of the American people.

It upholds the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution and its Bill of Rights, and the achievements of American de-

mocracy against all the enemies of popular liberties.

It is shaped by the needs of the nation at war, being formed in the midst of the greatest struggle of all history; it recognizes that victory for the free peoples over fascism will open up new and more favorable conditions for progress; it looks to the family of free nations, led by the great coalition of democratic capitalist and socialist states, to inaugurate an era of world peace, expanding production and economic well-being, and the liberation and equality of all peoples regardless of race, creed or color.

It adheres to the principles of scientific socialism, Marxism, the heritage of the best thought of humanity and of a hundred years' experience of the labor movement, principles which have proved to be indispensable to the national exis-

tence and independence of every nation; it looks forward to a future in which, by democratic choice of the American people, our own country will solve the problems arising out of the contradiction between the social character of production and its private ownership, incorporating the lessons of the most fruitful achievements of all mankind in a form and manner consistent with American traditions and character.

For the advancement of these aims, the Communist Political Association establishes the basic laws of its organization in the following Constitution.

ARTICLE I

Name

SECTION I. The name of this organization shall be Communist Political Association.

ARTICLE II

Purposes

SECTION 1. The purposes of the Association are to assure to its membership adequate information, education and organized participation in the political life of our country in cooperation with other Americans for the advancement and protection of the interests of the nation and its people.

ARTICLE III

Membership

SECTION 1. Any resident of the United States, eighteen years of age or more, regardless of political affiliation, race, color, national origin, sex or religious belief, who subscribes to the purposes of the Association shall be eligible for membership.

SECTION 2. Any person eligible for membership according to Section 1, who accepts the program and

policies of the Association as determined by its Constitution and Conventions, who is active on their behalf, reads the press and literature; pays dues regularly and holds membership in an Association club shall be considered a member.

ARTICLE IV

Initiation Fees, Dues and Assessments

SECTION 1. Initiation fees and dues shall be paid according to rates fixed by the National Convention.

SECTION 2. The income from dues and initiation fees shall be distributed to the various subdivisions of the Association as determined by the National Convention.

SECTION 3. Special assessments may be levied by the National Convention or by a two-thirds vote of the National Committee. All local

or district assessments are prohibited except by special permission of the National Committee.

ARTICLE V

Rights and Duties of Members

SECTION 1. Every member of the Association who is in good standing has the right to participate in the making of its policies and in the election of its leading committees, in a manner provided for in this Constitution.

SECTION 2. After thorough discussion in any club, committee or convention, decisions are made by a majority vote, and all members are duty-bound to carry out such decisions.

SECTION 3. Association members disagreeing with any decision of a club, state or county committee have the right to appeal such decision to the next higher body, until they

reach the National Committee and the National Convention. Decisions of the National Convention are final.

SECTION 4. No member shall be eligible to be elected to an office or committee, or to vote in the adoption of policies or in the election of officers, committees or delegates who is three months or more in arrears in the payment of dues.

SECTION 5. Every member is obligated to fight with all his strength against any and every effort, whether it comes from abroad or from within, to impose upon the American people the arbitrary will of any selfish minority group or party or clique or conspiracy, or to interfere with the unqualified right of the majority to direct the destinies of our country.

ARTICLE VI

Structure

SECTION 1. The basic organization of the Association is the club, which shall be organized on a community basis in cities, townships or rural areas.

The officers and executive committees of the clubs shall be elected by the membership by secret ballot once a year. Except for newly-organized clubs, these elections shall take place in January of each year.

The clubs shall meet at least monthly, but shall establish standing committees, to be provided by the By-Laws, whose task shall be to function continuously and develop activity under the direction of the club executive committee.

SECTION 2. The state organization shall comprise all clubs in one state organized in such subdivisions

as may be established, as provided for in this Constitution.

The highest body of the state organization is the State Convention, which shall convene every two years, and be composed of delegates elected by the conventions of the subdivisions of the Association or by the clubs in the state. The delegates shall be elected on the basis of numerical strength.

The State Convention shall elect, by majority vote, a State Committee, a President, Secretary, Treasurer and such other state officers as it may determine. The State Committee may be composed of regular and alternate members. It has the responsibility to carry out the Convention decisions and direct the activities of the state organization between state conventions.

The State Committee shall elect from among its members a State

Board, which shall be responsible to the State Committee.

Special state conventions may be called by either a majority vote of the State Committee, or upon written request of clubs representing one-third of the membership of the state.

SECTION 3. District organizations may be established by the National Committee. Where these cover two or more states, the State Committees shall be under the jurisdiction of the District Committees. elected by and representing the Association membership of the states composing these districts. The rules for convening the District Conventions and the election of leading committees shall be the same as those provided for the state organizations.

SECTION 4. State and District Committees shall have the power to establish all necessary subdivisions,

such as county and city organizations and committees, and the rules for election of such committees shall be the same as those provided for the State Committees.

SECTION 5. In matters of a state or local nature, the clubs, state and county committees have full autonomy and the right to make decisions within the limits of the general policies and Constitution of the Association and its Convention.

SECTION 6. All officers and leading committees of the Association, from the club executive committees to the highest committees, shall be elected either directly by the membership or through their elected delegates. Every committee must report regularly on its activities to the body that elected it.

SECTION 7. Any Association officer may be removed at any time from his position by a majority vote

of the body which elected him, or by the committee to which he is responsible.

ARTICLE VII

National Organization

SECTION 1. The highest authority of the Association is the National Convention. Regular National Conventions shall be held every two years. Only National Conventions are authorized to make political and organizational decisions binding upon the entire Association and its membership, except as provided in Article VII, Section 7.

SECTION 2. The National Convention shall be composed of delegates elected by the State and District Conventions. The delegates shall be elected on the basis of the numerical strength of the state or district organizations. The basis for

representation shall be determined by the National Committee.

SECTION 3. Prior to conventions, adequate time shall be allowed for discussion in all Association clubs of the main resolutions and problems coming before the convention. During this discussion all Association organizations have the right to adopt resolutions and propose amendments to the draft resolutions of the National Committee for consideration at the convention.

SECTION 4. The National Convention shall elect a National Committee by a majority vote. The National Committee shall be composed of the national officers and other regular and alternate members. Alternate members shall have voice but no vote, except where they replace regular members absent from meetings of the National Committee.

SECTION 5. The officers of the Association shall be: President, Vice-Presidents, Secretary, and Treasurer, and shall be elected by a majority vote of the convention.

SECTION 6. The number of members of the National Committee and the number of Vice-Presidents shall be determined by a majority vote of each National Convention.

SECTION 7. The National Committee is the highest authority of the Association between National Conventions and is responsible for the enforcement of the Constitution and the execution of the general policies adopted by the National Convention. The National Committee represents the Association as a whole and has the right to make decisions with full authority on any problem facing the Association between conventions. The National Committee organizes and supervises its various

departments and committees; conducts all the political-educational and organizational work of the Association; elects or removes editors of its press, who work under its leadership and guidance; organizes and directs all undertakings of importance to the entire Association; administers the national treasury. Special conventions may be called by the National Committee by a majority vote or by a vote of two-thirds of the State Committees. The National Committee shall submit a certified, audited financial report to each National Convention.

SECTION 8. The National Committee shall elect a National Board. The National Board shall be charged with the responsibility of carrying out the decisions and work of the National Committee between its sessions. The number of members of the Board shall be deter-

mined by the National Committee by majority vote. It shall be responsible for all its decisions to the National Committee. The duties and responsibilities of the Vice-Presidents shall be determined by the National Committee or National Board.

ARTICLE VIII

Disciplinary Procedures

SECTION 1. Conduct or action detrimental to the working class and the nation, as well as to the interests of the Association, violation of decisions of its leading committees or of this Constitution, financial irregularities, or other conduct unbecoming a member of the Association, may be punished by censure, removal from posts of leadership, or by expulsion from membership. Such conduct or action by any committee may be punished by removal

of the committee by the State or National Committee, which shall then order new elections for said committee.

SECTION 2. Adherence to or participation in the activities of any clique, group, circle, faction or party which conspires or acts to subvert, undermine, weaken or overthrow any or all institutions of American democracy, whereby the majority of the American people have maintained power to determine their destinies in any degree, shall be punished by immediate expulsion.

SECTION 3. The practice or advocacy of any form of racial or religious discrimination shall be grounds for expulsion from membership.

SECTION 4. No member shall have personal or political relations

with enemies of the working class and nation.

SECTION 5. Charges against individual members or committees may be made by any member in writing to the club of which he is a member, or to the leading committee having jurisdiction. Clubs shall act upon charges directed against anyone holding membership in that club.

SECTION 6. All parties concerned in disciplinary cases shall have the fullest right to appear, to bring witnesses and testify.

SECTION 7. The club or leading committee having jurisdiction shall have the right to decide by majority vote upon any disciplinary measure, including expulsion. Disciplinary measures taken by leading committees are subject to approval by the body to which they are responsible.

ARTICLE IX

Appeals

SECTION 1. Any member who has been subject to disciplinary action has the right to appeal to the next higher body up to the National Convention, whose decision shall be final.

ARTICLE X

Amending the Constitution

SECTION 1. This Constitution may be amended by a majority vote at any regular or special National Convention.

ARTICLE XI

Relations and Affiliations With Other Organizations

SECTION 1. The Association shall cooperate locally and nationally with all organizations whose activities contribute to the welfare and

furtherance of the interests of the working people and the nation.

SECTION 2. Organizations—local, state or national—which subscribe to the purposes of the Association as set forth in this Constitution and desire to become affiliated with it may be accepted, upon such conditions as the National Committee may adopt, by Association Committees in whose jurisdiction the application is made.

ARTICLE XII

By-Laws

SECTION 1. By-Laws may be adopted, based on this Constitution, for the purpose of establishing uniform rules and procedure for the proper functioning of the Association organizations. By-Laws may be adopted or changed by majority vote of the National Convention, or,

between conventions, by majority vote of the National Committee.

SECTION 2. State By-Laws not in conflict with the National Constitution and By-Laws may be adopted or changed by majority vote of the State Convention, or, between conventions, by majority vote of the State Committee.

*Adopted by the National Convention
held in New York City, May 20-22, 1944.*

BY-LAWS OF THE COMMUNIST POLITICAL ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK STATE

INTRODUCTION

This organization, having been formed at a convention called for the purpose of setting up an organization of the Communist Political Association for the State of New York, and having accepted and adopted the Preamble and Constitution of the National organization of the Communist Political Association as its own Preamble and Constitution, does hereby adopt these By-Laws pursuant to and in accordance with the same Preamble and Constitution and the resolution of

the National Committee of the Communist Political Association adopted thereunder. Following are the By-Laws of the Communist Political Association of the State of New York.

ARTICLE I

Name

SECTION 1. The name of this organization shall be Communist Political Association of New York State.

ARTICLE II

Organization

SECTION 1. This organization shall comprise all clubs and branches of the Association organized in and carrying on activities within the State of New York.

SECTION 2. All such clubs, now existing or which may hereafter be formed, shall be chartered by this

organization, through its proper officers and committees, which charters may define and determine the local jurisdiction of such clubs.

SECTION 3. Every person holding membership in such a club is a member of this organization.

ARTICLE III *Membership*

SECTION 1. Any member of the Association who is in arrears for more than three months ceases to be a member in good standing.

SECTION 2. Any member of the Association who leaves the area of jurisdiction of his Club or moves out of the state, shall require a transfer from the Club of which he is a member at the given time.

SECTION 3. Applicants for membership shall require the endorsement of a member of the Associa-

tion and a majority vote of a Club membership meeting.

ARTICLE IV *State Conventions*

SECTION 1. The State Convention is the highest body of this organization. It shall convene every two years, and shall be composed of delegates elected by the Clubs comprising this organization, or delegates elected at Conventions of subdivisions (such as county organizations, etc.) of this Association, which may hereafter be formed. Delegates to the State Convention shall be elected on the basis of numerical strength of the Clubs or the subdivisions of the organization, the basis to be determined by the State Committee.

SECTION 2. A State Committee shall be elected by majority vote of the State Convention and shall have

the responsibility of carrying out the Convention decisions and of directing the activities of the organization between State Conventions. The number of members of said Committee shall be determined at each State Convention. The State Committee shall meet at regularly designated intervals.

ARTICLE V

Officers and Committees

SECTION 1. The officers of the organization shall be a President, a Secretary, a Treasurer and a number of Vice-Presidents. The number of Vice-Presidents shall be determined by a majority of the Convention. All officers shall be elected by the State Convention by majority vote.

SECTION 2. The officers shall perform the duties usually associated with their offices and shall assume

any other responsibilities assigned to them by the State Committee.

SECTION 3. A State Board shall be elected by the State Committee from among its members, the number to be determined by the State Committee. It shall carry out the decisions and work of the State Committee between its meetings and shall be responsible for all its decisions and actions to said State Committee. The State Board shall decide on the frequency of its meetings.

ARTICLE VI

Local Organizations

SECTION 1. The State Committee shall provide for the setting up of local organizations of the state (such as county, etc.), based upon territorial or other subdivisions. Such local organizations, when set

up, shall be composed of all Clubs within such subdivisions.

SECTION 2. The supreme body of the County organization shall be the County Convention. The County Convention shall meet annually and elect a County Council which shall include at least one representative from each Club.

SECTION 3. Regular minutes of proceedings of the County Council shall be taken and read at said meetings. Copies of such minutes shall be forwarded regularly to the State organization.

SECTION 4. County and Club organizations shall adopt By-Laws which shall be in conformity with the National Constitution and the State By-Laws of the Association.

ARTICLE VII

Finances

SECTION 1. The State, County,

Club or any other organized part of the Association shall be required to have regular semi-annual audits of their financial transactions and to submit such financial reports to their respective bodies and copies to the next higher committee.

SECTION 2. The National Convention of the Association, having provided that 20 per cent of the income from dues shall remain with the Clubs, and that 50 per cent shall be paid to the National Committee, the remaining 30 per cent shall be allocated as follows: 20 per cent to the State organization and 10 per cent to the County organizations.

ARTICLE VIII

Local Officers

SECTION 1. Every Club of the Association shall elect an Executive Committee consisting of the following officers: a President, a Vice-Pres-

ident, an Executive Secretary, a Recording Secretary, a Treasurer, and such other members as the Club may add.

ARTICLE IX

Special Conventions

SECTION 1. Special State Conventions may be called either by a majority vote of the State Committee, or upon written request of the Clubs representing one-third of the members of the state organization.

ARTICLE X

Amendments

SECTION 1. These By-Laws may be amended by majority vote at any regular or special State Convention, or, between conventions by majority vote of the State Committee.

Adopted by the N. Y. State Convention held in New York City, June 10-11, 1944.

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